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PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

As the critical journals and magazines that circulate so widely through the British empire, have such an important influence on public opinion, —and as the taste, the knowledge, and the politics of the reading portion of the community, are drawn from such sources—it may be a matter of convenience to some, and of amusement to others, to give occasionally a “Review of Reviews,” and thus assist the literary economist in making up his mind and conversation, by pointing to the brightest and most profitable portions of our periodical literature to which he can resort, and upon which he may draw. With this view we propose to give occasional critiques of our most important reviews and literary journals ; and, as a first specimen, offer the following :

EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. CII.—*Theory of Population: Sadler versus Malthus—Macaulay. Monk's Life of Bentley. Life of Sir Stamford Raffles. Law Reform. Jefferson's Memoirs. Origin and Affinities of Language. State of Parties. Negro Slavery.*

The circulation of Reviews is a matter as certain and as regular as the circulation of the blood. Yet, as Harvey used to say that he never met a physician turned of forty, who looked with an eye of favour on his beautiful discovery—so most scholars of long standing view the periodical literature of the present times with an analogous distrust.—They indignantly deplore the appetite for superficial information that it generates, and grieve that the taste for folios has departed, never to return. Now, were it our purpose, which it is not, we could urge much in mitigation of their erudite displeasure. In this locomotive and enlightened age, when even from Mr. M'Adam the glory has in some degree departed—and rail-roads and steam-coaches throw open to our *bodies* the monopoly heretofore enjoyed by the feathered tribe, of being in “two places at once,” it would be preposterous to imagine that our *minds* should continue to plod along the weary ways through which our forefathers toiled slowly to their destination. In fact, our conscience would rebuke us, did we not stand by our old friends in all time of their necessity. And we do not hesitate to avow, that we are in the habit of taking counsel with the EDINBURGH, upon matters which become its age and gravity ; and that we listen to the QUARTERLY, with all the respect which is due to a publication patronized by great people ; and that we find the stern and stubborn speculations of the WESTMINSTER an admirable exercise for the little logic we can boast ; and that we read the lucubrations of the NEW MONTHLY with nearly as much pleasure as we do our own ; and that the grossness to which BLACKWOOD occasionally descends, has never deterred us from drawing in our chair amongst the company at Ambrose's, to gluttonize upon the unrivalled eccentricities of the Shepherd.

In the present paper, we intend to make the last number of THE EDINBURGH the subject of discourse. It is not our purpose, however, to be very textual ;—a bare analysis of the articles would much exceed our space, and infinitely more our readers' patience. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with some cursory observations connected with the most important.

The first is a refutation of Mr. Sadler's theory of population. The Member for Newark is already known to the reading public at this side of the water, by a work on Ireland. He there details its “Evils,” with

a warmth which we should scarcely have expected from an Englishman, and propounds his "Remedies," with an earnestness which is creditable to his philanthropy. His book contains, if not the most able, at least the most elaborate defence of a system of poor laws for Ireland, with which we are acquainted; and presents much historical and statistical information, somewhat pedantically displayed. In fact, Mr. Sadler is much too fond of exhibiting his reading: no matter how commonplace the sentiment, it must be dignified by a quotation—no matter how trite the passage cited, it is honoured by a reference. He thinks it necessary to point with equal particularity to a line in Hamlet, "familiar in our mouths as household words," as to some antithetical prettiness taken from Young's Night Thoughts, or any book which no one ever reads. His style, moreover, is too ambitious for scientific discussion. Every muscle of his mind seems on the strain, in order to produce effect. Every period is polished up into the highest brilliancy of which it is susceptible, and the rhetorician perpetually jostles the philosopher from his seat. "There are reasons," says Fluellin, "why and wherefore in all things;" and, in our opinion, it is not difficult to account for Mr. Sadler's anxiety to show his learning. When Grotius accumulates authorities in support of his positions, we are not amazed at his Alpine erudition—for we remember that Grotius was by profession as much a scholar as a jurist. But what is only extraordinary in a man of letters becomes astounding in a linen-merchant. "He that holdeth the plough, that glorieth in the goad, and whose talk is of bullocks," is debarred by one of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament from the acquisition of wisdom. In the same way, it might be thought that learning had little affinity with the labours of the loom. When, therefore, we find Mr. Sadler explaining the force of a Hebraism, or quoting Blumenbach in the original German, and seeming as if it were a labour to him to refrain from writing out his book in Greek, we discern something for the world to wonder at. Let us not be misunderstood: we respect the liberal ambition by which Mr. Sadler has been influenced, and merely wish that, on some occasions, his very creditable attainments had been more judiciously displayed. Besides, he appears to dwell upon his own discoveries with too much self-complacency. Newton, it is said, remarked on one occasion, that "if Cotes had lived, we might have known something"—and on another, likened himself to "a child picking pebbles on the sea-shore." We cannot say that the observations of Mr. Sadler recalled, by their resemblance, these indications of humility.—Against political economy, political economists, and more especially Mr. Malthus, he wages unmitigated war, and appears to imagine that in his last work he has smitten Goliath on the forehead. Now we certainly are not disposed to ridicule political economy;—we cannot conceive how a science which treats of the creation and distribution of public wealth can be an object of legitimate contempt to any statesman. But Mr. Sadler and others will speak about absurdity, and crave leave to laugh a little at Mr. M'Culloch's opinion upon Irish absenteeism. Well, we also look upon it as a good joke—and not the worse, of course, for having a dash of mischief in it.—But the causes which excite our risibility are different. They laugh at it, conceiving that it *is* political economy; we laugh at it, because, in our opinion, it *is not* political economy. No science can be accountable for the extravagance of its professors. Are we to sneer at medicine, because there was such a quack as Paracelsus; or at metaphysics, on account of the idealism of Berkeley; or at astronomy, because it once appeared in conjunction with the vortices of Des

Cartes?—why then should political economy be scouted, because Mr. M'Culloch or any other man waxes paradoxical?

But, enough of Mr. Sadler—and now for his Reviewer, Mr. Thomas Babington Macauley. This gentleman is the son of a London merchant, whose name will doubtless be familiar to such of our readers as take an interest in the abolition of Negro slavery. He became, we believe, a Commissioner of Bankrupts during the Canning administration, and sat part of last session for the borough of Calne, which he continues to represent. For some years he has been a distinguished contributor to the *EDINBURGH*; and the articles upon Milton, Dryden, Machiavelli, Hallam's History, Mill's Essay on Government, and Southey's Colloquies, dwell in our recollection as evidencing the extent and versatility of his talents. We think that no one can read any of these essays without recognising a highly vigorous and accomplished intellect. What a fine and fervent spirit animates his dissertation upon Milton, yet how free from what he himself has termed "Boswellism," is the discriminative panegyric which he bestows on the illustrious dead. How acutely does he investigate those apparent inconsistencies in the character of Machiavelli, which had eluded even the sagacity of Bacon, and reconcile the author of "The Prince" with the sufferer for freedom. That the best poetry is always the production of a barbarous age, is no new opinion; but where is it so eloquently advocated as in the article on Dryden? Mr. Macauley, however, is not without defects: we like a pointed style—but epigram may be accumulated to excess; and he indulges too unsparingly in antithesis, notwithstanding he has arrived at that period of life when the passion for it should be considerably cooled. We must also remark, that illustrations drawn from incidents in the "Arabian Nights," and other works not sufficiently venerable to confer dignity on the subject, contrast somewhat unfavourably with the exquisite appropriateness of most of his allusions. It seems, moreover, natural to expect that the same desire to strike, which sometimes leads to quaintness in a writer's style, should occasionally tend to render him paradoxical in his opinions; and we cannot help thinking that Mr. Macauley keeps the fear of commonplace too much before his eyes. Notwithstanding these defects, however, he is, according to our judgment, one of the most promising writers of the day. His treatment of general topics exhibits the man of genius and the man of business in unusual combination; and his style possesses both strength and eloquence—body and soul.

Let us introduce our readers to the present article:—Since Mr. Malthus published his "Essay on Population," its principles have reigned almost entirely triumphant. Some years ago, indeed, it was assailed by Mr. Godwin with much violence and some skill; but his attempt was looked upon as a decided failure—and old bachelors appealed to the Essay as complacently as ever. In Mr. Sadler, however, it was destined to experience a more formidable foe. Unlike his predecessor, who merely brandished a pamphlet in the argumentative conflict, this gentleman determines to crush his antagonist beneath three well-filled octavos. He has contrived to bring together an immense mass of information from every region peopled by the confusion of tongues, and has calculated each accession to their population since the old commandment, to increase and multiply. The result of his investigation we give in his own words:—"The fecundity of human beings, otherwise similarly circumstanced, varies inversely as their numbers on a given space. This definition may be thus amplified and explained:—Pre-

ming as a mere truism, that marriages under similar circumstances will, on the average, be equally fruitful everywhere, I proceed to state, that the prolificness of a given number of marriages will, all other circumstances being the same, vary in proportion to the condensation of the population; so that the prolificness shall be greatest where the numbers on an equal space are the fewest—and, on the contrary, the smallest where those numbers are the largest."

The difference between the Malthusian and Sadlerian theories is this: The former teaches that population, proceeding in a higher ratio than production, has a constant tendency to press upon the means of subsistence, in the scantiness of which is its physical check—whilst the latter inculcates that population is kept down by condensation alone, and becomes stationary at the precise point where the greatest plenty is enjoyed—condensation and prosperity, according to Mr. Sadler, travelling invariably together. Now, desirable as Mr. Sadler's system unquestionably is, we must say that it has always appeared to us a very arbitrary one. If it were asserted of this kingdom, that the number of children in each parish varied inversely as the number of pews in the parish church—though we have read too much about the connection between cause and effect to know a great deal upon the subject, and would therefore be very unwilling to deny the possibility of the fact alleged—we should, nevertheless, require an extremely accurate census to cure our scepticism. We feel pretty much in the same way respecting Mr. Sadler's theory. The influence of condensation, apart from its relation to subsistence, could hardly have been expected to govern population. Can there be any thing in the air of a thickly-inhabited district which makes its matrons less prolific? We can conceive that as population condenses, it presses more upon subsistence, and consequently experiences a check. But this is the Malthusian heresy, which Mr. Sadler expressly and repeatedly denounces; and he adduces innumerable arguments and tables, which, in his opinion, prove abundantly the universality of *his* principle, and quotes sundry authorities, from Hippocrates to Hunter, upon the physiology of the human race. Mr. Macauley (of whom we have too long lost sight) thinks that his arguments are unsound, and that his own tables prove his theory to be erroneous. Mr. Sadler first objects to Mr. Malthus, that his system is inconsistent with the Divine benevolence. Mr. Macauley replies, that the existence of physical evil either can be explained, or it cannot; if it can be explained, the evil of over-population may take advantage of the solution; and if it cannot be explained, it only presents a difficulty similar to that contained in many other calamities. Mr. Sadler lauds his own theory for its beneficial consequences. Mr. Macauley proves that, by Mr. Sadler's showing, the population of London is increasing considerably by internal propagation; and concluding, therefore, that there is nothing in his principle to prevent the whole earth from becoming as full of men, women, and children, as St. Giles' parish, considers the consequences thus disclosed quite as deplorable as any proclaimed by Mr. Malthus. Mr. Sadler thinks that the invariable operation of his law is proved by tables exhibiting the comparative population of different countries, and different tracts of the same country. Mr. Macauley shows by those tables, that the number of persons on a given space does not regulate the comparative prolificness of France and England, and exhibits the same fact with respect to different counties and districts in the latter kingdom. Mr. Sadler looks upon the towns of Great Britain as furnishing an irrefragable demonstration in his favour. Mr. Macauley, admitting

the effect "of general sickliness and want of tone produced by close air and sedentary employment," instances various towns in which the fecundity of marriages is greater than that which obtains amongst some dispersed and rural populations adduced by Mr. Sadler. Mr. Sadler's decisive proof, however, is derived from the British Peerage; he shows that peers are a marrying class, and, from their usual longevity, a healthy class; and, as peerages often become extinct, he infers that they are a sterile class. Mr. Macauley quotes Debrett's Peerage, and, counting our nobility and their children, states that the latter average 4.3 to a marriage "more than the average number in those counties of England where, according to Mr. Sadler's own statement, the fecundity is the greatest." The extinction of peerages is accounted for by the fact, that most of them are limited to heirs male, who may be expected to be sometimes deficient, in which contingency, as the younger sons of peers are decidedly not marrying men, it is often difficult to discover a collateral heir. There are other issues joined between the parties, of which we have taken no notice—content with giving our readers an abstract of the most important pleadings. As this is a matter extremely interesting to Ireland—for philoprogenitiveness is the national bump—we await with impatience the reply of Mr. Sadler. His third volume, which has not yet appeared, will probably contain it. But, until he shall have placed his system on an infallible foundation, we would advise our poor countrymen and countrywomen to halt even on the brink of matrimony, and pause a little before they cast themselves down headlong. Winter is approaching, and the children of Ireland should not rival in multitude the *larvæ* of the insect world, until their parents shall have made as careful a provision for the *hibernation* of their progeny.

The next article is entitled "Monk's Life of Bentley." "All is vanity," saith Solomon; yet surely of all vanities the critic's glory is the greatest. How limited is the fame of this man, so mighty in emendation—a giant amongst Patagonians—the most learned of a learned age—before whose invincible erudition the varied talents of Le Clerc were unable to sustain him, and the classic pride of Oxford was humbled to the dust!—with whom all Porson's Greek would only have been a trifle, and the Latin of Parr a very little thing. Intellect, no matter how employed, must always be respectable, and a mind of a high order might doubtless find full exercise in proving the spuriousness of the Fables of Æsop or the Epistles of Phalaris. But, in apportioning renown, the public in general are rank Utilitarians—they applaud only those labours of which they can discern the advantage. For mind abstractedly considered they have little veneration. The ingenuity of the schoolmen has not rescued from oblivion the frivolous disputes on which it was employed, nor will the acuteness of the most consummate scholar extort from the present time a true and hearty admiration. We think, indeed, that classical learning is declining in estimation. This can be readily accounted for. After the deluge of barbarism, by which Europe was inundated, had in some degree subsided, and the dry land partially appeared, ancient literature was the only literature in existence. Upon the revival of learning, therefore, when the human mind roused itself like a strong man after sleep—to collect, and correct, and perfect the buried works of ancient authors was the object which engrossed the intellect of Europe. The fossil remains of antiquity were searched for and dug up in every direction. Specimens of enormous intellectual races, then altogether unknown, perpetually agitated the examiners with wonder and

delight. At this period the profound and successful scholar was held in the highest possible esteem. Italy—the last to lose the light, the first to hail the dawn—honoured the labours of Politian and others with an admiration which appears to us extravagant. Gradually, however, circumstances became altered, and the appetite for learning, which always “makes the meat it feeds on,” began, by its cravings, to create new aliment. As modern literature increased, classical learning became relatively depreciated. The nations made unto themselves other gods than those at whose shrines they had formerly bowed down; and the priests of the neglected temple consequently declined in estimation. Modern literature was no doubt moulded by the ancient, in shape and lineament; but, like the monster in *Frankenstein*, it now threatens the very existence of its creator. Something like frivolity has gradually attached itself to the pursuits of the mere scholar. The many appear to look upon such exercises as very proper for our youth, but seem to think that when they become men they should put away childish things. We do not mean to say that the smattering of the classics through which our children are whipped in the usual course of education, is less attended to than formerly; but we are quite certain that all enthusiasm in the study of ancient literature has, generally speaking, died away. In our universities it finds, of course, its most appropriate retreat; yet, though the classic muse still wakes her strain by the waters of the Isis, she has hung her harp in sorrow on the willows of the Cam. We do not know that the studies of Dublin possess any very distinctive character. On the advantage or disadvantage of this revolution in the public taste, we offer no opinion. We think, however, that we have stated unquestionable facts. Those who take an interest in such matters will find the agitated and pugnacious life of Bentley, with all his literary and litigious proceedings, well delineated in the article whose title suggested the foregoing remarks.

“Niebuhr’s *Roman History*” next solicits our attention. We once made a bold attempt to master this learned work in Mr. Walter’s translation, and need scarcely say that we were signally defeated. We found the style of thought so impenetrably Germanic, that we could not for the life of us guess, upon many occasions, what it was that the author was inclined to conjecture. The profundity of Kant may in some degree be fathomed, and the sublimity of Richter is not altogether in the clouds; but Niebuhr’s meaning is inscrutable. He glides before the bewildered reader as mantled and as muffled up, as an emissary of the Secret Tribunal. We have heard that Lord Plunkett frequently beguiles his leisure hours by running through a mathematical treatise: if his Lordship do not heed a head-ache, his mind, after such gymnastic exercise, might, perhaps, encounter Niebuhr with success. We ourselves were able to discover that his literary creed is extremely sceptical; and that, not content with rejecting the prodigies of Livy, he treats the whole early history of Rome as a splendid romance. An intelligible work of this description seems to be required; and we wish some person would undertake to re-write the present for the general advantage. Porson used to say, that the “*Decline and Fall*” was a very valuable book, and that he wished somebody would take the trouble of translating it into English. This was, perhaps, a fair enough sarcasm against the artificial and unidiomatic style of Gibbon; but Niebuhr really requires that his obscurities should be cleared up. Dumont introduced our countryman Bentham to continental readers, amongst whom the reputation of that eminent juriconsult is higher than at home. Is there no one to per-

form a similar act of kindness for the learned German? The present article, though laborious throughout, and a little heavy now and then, gives a pretty fair specimen of the tone of this eccentric work, but meddles little with its matter.

We now come to the "*Life of Sir Stamford Raffles*," written by his widow. It is but justice to the conversation of ancient maidens to declare, that the desire to become acquainted with other people's concerns is a natural propensity. It produces in every tavern in London a competition for the "*Morning Herald*," in order to read its police reports, and for the "*Age*," for the sake of its personality and scandal. A heap of stupid trash, entitled "*A Fashionable Novel*," and furnished with a key to instruct the uninitiated, is by its assistance puffed into notoriety. But it is not confined to fiction. Where is there a more entertaining work than "*Boswell's Life of Johnson*?" To be sure, every page reveals the author as a consummate coxcomb. You see that he prides himself not a little on his skill in exhibiting the lion, (or, to use Mrs. Boswell's more correct appellative, the bear,) and that he takes to himself considerable credit for his tact in drawing forth the animal's uncouth sagacity. Yet, though you laugh at the author, and his vanity, and his gossip, and his important way of saying nothing, you nevertheless read his book. Doctor Parr at one time intended to have written a life of Johnson: "Sir," said that eminent scholar to a friend, "it would have been, with two exceptions, the most learned work ever offered to the world. Instead of the droppings of Johnson's lips, I would have given a history of his mind." Now, that the Doctor did not carry into effect his erudite design, is a circumstance on which we sincerely congratulate his publisher. In all probability, it would be about as generally read as his Spittal Sermon, with its never-ending notes. We would rather overhear a conversation between Johnson and Boswell, at the tavern in Fleet-street, than wade with Dr. Parr through the most extensive library in Europe. It is this desire to get behind the scenes, in front of which all play their parts, that makes biography so fascinating. This species of composition has the same relation to history, that a book of travels bears to a treatise on geography, or a landscape to a map. The extensive design of the one renders imperative the omission of those minor matters which give to the other its individuality and interest. Our East Indian possessions have recently presented three valuable additions to this branch of our literature: the lives of Raffles, Heber, and Munro. How different these great men from the ordinary flight of adventurers who wing their way to that distant region! For the tribe who are in the habit of bringing back from India a fortune and a liver-complaint, we have, for the most part, no very great affection. The warmth of temper to which Burke was constitutionally subject, doubtless magnified the crimes of Hastings—and he may have dwelt upon the overthrow of ancient dynasties, and the exactions by which fertile provinces had been ruined, and the tyranny which had ground their simple people to the dust, with an eloquence as inapplicable as it was sublime. Yet, still, India is not the place where we should have looked to find a Raffles rising to eminence solely by his character and talents, and liberalizing an official life by a generous attention to the cause of literature and science;—or a Heber, mild, zealous, and judicious—descending, with Howard-like philanthropy, into spiritual prison-houses, to set the captive free;—or a Munro, of whom it was said by an eloquent senator now no more, "that Europe never produced a more accomplished statesman, nor India, so fertile in heroes, a more skilful

soldier ;" but on whom a nobler panegyric is pronounced by a population whom he protected, and who still speak with veneration of "The Father of the People." Such characters rise amidst the moral waste by which they are surrounded, like so many Oases in the desert, with their groves of olive trees. The article is well worth the reading.

In the next there is an useful commercial history of Holland ; and the paper on Mr. Gore's "Women as they are," contains a clever critique on our most distinguished female authors.

The cause of "Law Reform," the subject of the succeeding article, is rapidly gaining ground. The public, to be sure, have no time to investigate the subtleties of pleading, or penetrate the mists in which conveyancing is wrapped ; but they feel, that to furnish a good article at a reasonable price, should be the aim of every legal system, and know that by that which now exists, an article, frequently adulterated, is disposed of at a rate altogether exorbitant. The lawyers also are beginning to see their own interest. Jeremy Bentham and Codification are still, of course, for a scoff, and a bye-word, and a shaking of the head, amongst them ; but the very name of Reform is no longer a sound at which the knees of the Bar smite together in terror, and the hearts of Attorneys are failing them for fear. Financiers have often found that a lessened duty has produced an increased revenue. A similar principle would doubtless operate in the present instance. People are now deterred from law by its insupportable expense. Let the price of it be lowered, and the nominal reduction will be more than counterbalanced by the augmented demand. The present article treats exclusively of Mr. Brougham's plan for introducing District Courts into England. We think this purposes a most desirable return to the principles of antiquity, which (as acted on by Alfred in the establishment of Local Courts, which have long fallen into disuse,) brought justice home to every man's door. Mr. Brougham's Bill, which will be discussed next Session, embraces only the county of Kent and the palatinate of Durham ; but should the experiment succeed, it is his purpose to extend the principle.

"Jefferson's Memoirs" are next upon the list. The motto of the Edinburgh—" *Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur* "—does not betoken a very lenient cast of criticism ; and though Blackwood arrogates exclusively the administration of the knout, this Review has on many occasions inflicted signal chastisement on literary delinquents. An arbitrary code, in order to be tolerable, must be impartially dispensed ; but we perceive by some American publications that our transatlantic friends are inclined of late to arraign the equity of northern adjudication. We think they have, upon the whole, some grounds for their complaint. We say nothing in defence of the Tariff, though we do not clearly see how Jonathan merits to be made

" A fixed figure, for the hand of scorn
To point its slow, unmoving finger at,"

merely for treating our fine cottons inhospitably, while we take such especial care to shut the door upon his flour and tobacco. But in an article on American literature, in the number which preceded that at present under consideration, we think that, while the unrivalled logic of Jonathan Edwards was suitably appreciated, the treatment of Dr. Channing, and one or two other writers, furnished an illustration of the art of "damning with faint praise." The present article, however, is completely to our taste, and sums up the character of Jefferson in a calm, unprejudiced, judicial spirit. In that revolution which influenced so

powerfully the affairs of Europe—which, by ranging France on the side of insurrection, contributed to spread liberal opinions among her people, and contending as this country was against insubordination, rendered the principles of legitimacy in some degree national in England; in that revolution—which, by operating on the one kingdom, certainly precipitated the eruption, and, by acting on the other, probably accelerated the war—no man sustained throughout a more manly part than Jefferson. His natural decision of character, and unsophisticated good sense, gave him that weight to which in agitated times such qualities are entitled. It was he who drew up the declaration of independence. In the splendid print which commemorates that event, we think his portrait strikingly characteristic. With Adams, placid, plain, and Quakerish on the one side—and Franklin, with his keen, practical, poor-Robin's-almanack expression of countenance, on the other—there he stands—in stature like another Saul—his well-opened forehead without a furrow in which a lie could lurk—looking as if it would be easier to shoulder the Andes from their base, or turn again the Mississippi to its source, than to sway him but an inch from the path of rectitude. Bonaparte is said to have wished—and the aspiration was indicative of a noble mind—to go down to posterity with his code in his hand; but Jefferson, holding the declaration of independence, will suggest to future times no disparaging associations. He did not fear the scaffold when the conflict was uncertain; he did not covet power when the victory was secured; he laboured for his country, to the neglect of his little patrimony, and retired in a good old age to spend the remainder of his days in poverty and usefulness. We know that in the opinion of these distrustful times the names of patriotism and public spirit, and such antiquated matters, should only be found in themes composed at school about Brutus and Epaminondas, and we shall probably be looked upon as shallow politicians when we claim the praise of virtue for any public man whatever. We shall still, however, venture to sympathise with the hermit of Monticello, and the goodly fellowship by which he was surrounded.

In the article on the “Origin and Affinities of Language,” we have a vague subject treated with learning and ability. We have heard of an ingenious gentleman—a North Briton of course—who attempted to demonstrate that the language spoken by Adam and Eve in Paradise was broad Scotch. We should suppose that his arguments were pretty nearly as conclusive as those on which scholars have been in the habit of disporting themselves in favour of other theories. The learned have, generally speaking, oscillated between the Gothic and the Celtic with tolerable regularity; and as we know so little about the matter, it is not probable that an *experimentum crucis* will ever be devised to settle their disputed claims. Still, such investigations are not without their benefits. The vanities of alchymy gave us the science of chemistry; and in our own day the phrenologists have in some degree revived a taste for the investigation of mental phenomena. In the same manner, a pursuit of the affinities of language may serve to clear up some historical obscurities.

The last article in the present number is entitled, “State of Parties—The Ministry.” The appearance of this essay excited a considerable sensation, (to use a hacknied phrase;) and it will, probably, be considered by the generality of readers the most important of the set. It has been attributed to Mr. Brougham, with what correctness we cannot positively say, though from the similarity of its tone to that of many of the speeches delivered during the York election, we should think it

likely to be the production of that distinguished individual. It is sometimes said that parties have died away in these countries, but the remark is true only in a restricted sense. We admit, indeed, that adverse opinions about the propriety of the French war, and the respective policy of Pitt and Fox, have in a great degree ceased to divide public men, and even private companies. An important measure of domestic policy may be disposed of, and the parties formed by its agitation sink gradually to rest. But, while temporary names and badges pass away into oblivion, the two great parties of the constitution—the court party and the country party—are as old as its formation, and will be as permanent as its existence. The composition and resolution of forces are continually exhibited in political mechanics, and by these alone can the true constitutional equilibrium be properly preserved. The individuals who compose those parties change with circumstances. We remember when a noble earl of great political talents, who long had designated himself as “the friend of the people,” was transformed into a champion of aristocracy, determined “to stand or fall with his order,” and since that period we have seen some adherents range themselves under the popular banner who had before contended under other colours. But while members drop off from time to time, the bodies themselves possess a corporate immortality, and the permanent Whig and Tory parties of the constitution continue to exist, though the personal Whig and Tory parties of the French Revolution have departed with the occasion. A perpetuation of their animosities would have been as senseless and as mischievous as the green and yellow factions which agitated the hippodrome of Constantinople in the decline of the empire, or those which occasionally dispense broken heads in the turmoil of an Irish fair. This dissolution of minor ties has been for some time in operation. It commenced about the period of Lord Londonderry’s death. Parties became rather indistinct in their outlines during the Foreign Secretaryship of Mr. Canning, and his elevation to the Premiership was attended with more important changes. A Whig and Tory administration was encountered by a Whig and Tory opposition. The Roman Catholic Relief Bill going still farther, exercised a power of transformation altogether pantomimic; and many subsequent divisions in both houses have been as motley as the garb of Harlequin. Different people will see these matters in different lights, and while some may view the party feelings which have passed away as fetters upon independence, others may be inclined to consider their extinction as the removal of a curb on profligacy. We, for our part, confess that we are inclined to augur well from the breaking down of the strong holds of faction; and though we have no expectation that parties will cease to exist, we do look to see them founded more upon public principles than formerly: we may be disappointed in our calculation—but we like to hope the best. The object of the writer in the *Edinburgh* is, to show the propriety of a coalition between the Whigs, the High Tories, and the small but intellectual body of which the late Mr. Huskisson was at the head, for the purposes of displacing the Duke of Wellington, and giving to the country an efficient government. It is ably written, but would require more discussion than we could now afford to give it. That some changes must take place should the present ministry remain in office, no one in his senses seems to doubt. The public cannot view with approbation an arbitrary pedant ruling in the foreign office, or behold without contempt the financial affairs of a great nation committed to presumptuous incapacity. We want an honest government at all times; the present call

imperatively for an able one, and we have in abundance the *materiel* for its construction.

But we gladly abandon these matters, to say a word on a subject more inspiring. A note to the present Number announces the reception of the authenticated report of Mr. Brougham's great speech on Negro Slavery, and gives a short quotation. This glorious cause is progressing gloriously. Generalities, for the most part, drop powerless upon the public ear; and yet it is difficult to advocate a principle like this, without falling into something like vague and empty declamation. Shall we condescend to bestow upon our adversaries, the compliment of an argumentative refutation, impale the planter on a dilemma, or transfix him with the syllogism? Our common humanity shrinks from such cold-blooded demonstration. If an individual abstract our substance, we shall hand him over at once, for coercion, to offended justice, without pausing one moment to debate with him about the nature and the rights of property. In the same manner, but in a far higher degree, we think it affronting to every principle of common sense and common feeling, to set ourselves soberly to prove, in mood and figure, that one man can never legitimately hold another man in bondage; and were our Statute Book transcribed, as it ought to be, from the volume of inspiration, the sophistry which should defend so monstrous a position, would deserve to be refuted, (as Burke observed on another occasion,) not by the logician's syllogism, but by the hangman's lash. Toward individuals, however, we entertain no animosity—their sins rest upon the system, and it is that alone we execrate. Property is spoken of; but an interference with it in the present case would observe higher laws than those which it would appear, at first sight, to transgress. They say, moreover, that the Negro is unfit for freedom; and we therefore desire his emancipation, well knowing that liberty alone can raise him from his degradation. We think that moral and intellectual death should not continue to possess him—we feel that power has been entrusted to us to call him forth out of the tomb—we are aware that he must at first bear the marks of his former state about him, and be bound hand and foot with grave clothes; but these things need not permanently incapacitate him—we can afterwards loose him and let him go. We have a strong and steadfast hope that a triumph, glorious and complete, awaits the friends of humanity next session. Too long has the slave ship, shattered as she is, kept her accursed hulk above the waters; but the avenging storm now gathers round her track—the swell begins to heave already—her timbers gape for sudden dissolution—a few mariners may lash themselves to her dark deck, but her final hour will come at length—down let her sink, “ten thousand fathoms deep.”

We will reward the reader of this desultory paper, with the following extract from Mr. Brougham's speech. We have heard that this effective orator is in the habit of elaborating his perorations with the greatest care, and this we think is, perhaps, upon the whole, the finest he has yet put forth. The closing of his speech in the House of Lords, in favour of the Queen, unquestionably possesses great merit—but of the concluding passages of that on Law Reform, we have always thought *materiem superabat opus*. There are a plumpness and rotundity in the following sentences, that well contrast with the speaker's every-day manner, which is somewhat wiry and complicated:

“I trust that at length the time is come when parliament will no longer bear to be told that slave-owners are the best lawgivers on slavery; no longer suffer our voice to roll across the Atlantic in empty warnings and

fruitless orders. Tell me not of rights—talk not of the property of the planter in his slaves. I deny his right—I acknowledge not the property. The principles, the feelings of our common nature rise in rebellion against it. Be the appeal made to the understanding or to the heart, the sentence is the same that rejects it. In vain you tell me of laws that sanction such a claim! There is a law above all the enactments of human codes—the same throughout the world—the same in all times; such as it was before the daring genius of Columbus pierced the night of ages, and opened to one world the sources of power, wealth, and knowledge, to another all unutterable woes—such is it at this day: it is the law written by the finger of God on the heart of man; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, while men despise fraud, and loath rapine, and hate blood, they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy, that man can hold property in man! In vain you appeal to treaties—to covenants between nations. The covenants of the Almighty, whether the old covenant or the new, denounce such unholy pretensions. To these laws did they of old refer, who maintained the African trade. Such treaties did they cite—and not untruly; for by one shameful compact you bartered the glories of Blenheim for the traffic in blood. Yet, in despite of law and of treaty, that infernal traffic is now destroyed, and its votaries put to death like other pirates. How came this change to pass? Not, assuredly, by parliament leading the way: but the country at length awoke; the indignation of the people was kindled; it descended in thunder and smote the traffic, and scattered its guilty profits to the winds. Now, then, let the planters beware—let their assemblies beware—let the government at home beware—let the parliament beware! The same country is once more awake—awake to the condition of Negro slavery; the same indignation kindles in the bosom of the same people; the same cloud is gathering that annihilated the slave-trade; and if it shall descend again, they on whom its crash may fall, will not be destroyed before I have warned them; but I pray that their destruction may turn away from us the more terrible judgments of God!"

The facts stated in the following little memorandum, recently circulated by the Dublin Anti-Slavery Society, are so creditable to Ireland, that we willingly give them a place in our publication:

It may call up a salutary blush on the cheeks of Englishmen, perhaps, to learn that the children of their ancestors owed the obligation of enfranchisement to Christian principles in Ireland, so late as the twelfth century. Strange though it may appear, it is true that our forefathers (Englishmen) used to sell their countrymen, and even their own children, to the Irish; and the port of Bristol, which lately sent out so many ships to lade human flesh in Africa, was then equally distinguished as a market for the same commodity, though of a different colour.* But when Ireland, in the year 1172, was afflicted with public calamities, the clergy and people of that generous nation began to reproach themselves with the unchristian practice of purchasing and holding in slavery their fellow-men, although natives of an island from which they had begun to suffer great injuries. They did not regard the crimes of a less enlightened people as any sanction for their own; and, therefore, their English slaves, though fairly paid for, were, by an unanimous resolution of an assembly held at Armagh, chiefly composed of the clergy, set at liberty.

"*Super his Hiberniæ miseriis et ab Anglo periculis convenit apud Ard-machum, (Anno 1172) plurima hominum præcipuorum multitudo præcipue clericorum, qui concluderunt, eo hæc mala inflicta esse Hiberniæ, quod olim Anglorum pueros a mercatoribus ad se invectos, in servitutem emerant contra jus Christianæ libertatis. Angli enim olim pauperes ut necessitatem supplerent, vel proprios filios vendere, haud educare soliti sunt; unde cum*

* See William of Malmesbury, in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, tom. ii. p. 258.